CHILDREN OF CHERNOBYL

A Daily Express Appeal

The world's worst nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986 left a legacy of death and disease among children contaminated by radiation.

The unseen killer is now claiming its victims more than four years after the disaster.

Tragically, if many of the youngsters now suffering from radiation-linked cancers lived in Europe or America they might stand a good chance of being saved.

But in the USSR, where the majority of clinics and hospitals lack medicines and equipment, there is little hope.

We are able to cure between 70 to 80% of youngsters suffering from childhood leukaemias. In specialist Soviet clinics half such children can be saved, but beds are limited and in most local hospitals the survival rate is less than one in ten.

Their definition of success is to extend a child's life for five or six years, but the quality of that life with painful drug and radiation treatment in spartan hospitals and clinics is often poor.

So the 300,000 children from the Chernobyl region of Kiev now face death or hope that help will come from the West.